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(b) A claimant may not have access to or custody of official Department of Veterans Affairs records concerning himself or herself nor may a claimant inspect records concerning himself or herself. Disclosure of information from Department of Veterans Affairs records to a claimant or his or her duly authorized agent or representative may be made, however, under the provisions of §§ 1.501 through 1.526.

(c) Each administration, staff office, and field facility head will designate an employee(s) who will be responsible for initial action on (granting or denying) requests to inspect or obtain information from or copies of records under their jurisdiction and within the purview of §§ 1.501 through 1.526 unless the regulations in this part currently contain such designations. The request should be made to the office concerned (having jurisdiction of the record desired) or, if not known, to the Director or Veterans Assistance Officer in the nearest VA regional office, or to the VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20420. Personal contacts should normally be made during the regular duty hours of the office concerned, which are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, for VA Central Office and most field facilities. Any legal question arising in a field facility concerning the release of information will be referred to the appropriate Regional Counsel for disposition as contemplated by § 13.401 of this chapter. In central office such legal questions will be referred to the General Counsel. Any administrative question will be referred through administrative channels to the appropriate administration or staff office head.

(d) Upon denial of a request under paragraph (c) of this section, the responsible Department of Veterans Affairs official or designated employee will inform the requester in writing of the denial and advise him or her that he or she may appeal the denial. The requester will also be furnished the title and address of the Department of Veterans Affairs official to whom the appeal should be addressed. (See § 1.527.) In each instance of denial of a request, the denial will be made a matter of record and the record will contain a citation to the specific provision

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of Department of Veterans Affairs regulations upon which the denial is based.

[24 FR 8174, Oct. 8, 1959, as amended at 32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967; 38 FR 15601, June 14, 1973]

§ 1.501 Release of information by the Secretary.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs or the Deputy Secretary may release information, statistics, or reports to individuals or organizations when in the Secretary's or Deputy Secretary's judgment such release would serve a useful purpose.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967, as amended at 54 FR 34980, Aug. 23, 1989]

§ 1.502 Disclosure of the amount of monetary benefits.

The monthly rate of pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, retirement pay, subsistence allowance, or educational assistance allowance of any beneficiary shall be made known to any person who applies for such information.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967]

§ 1.503 Disclosure of information to a veteran or his or her duly authorized representative as to matters concerning the veteran alone.

Information may be disclosed to a veteran or his or her duly authorized representative as to matters concerning himself or herself alone when such disclosure would not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the veteran. If the veteran be deceased, matters concerning him or her may be disclosed to his widow, children, or next of kin if such disclosure will not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the person in whose behalf information is sought or cause repugnance or resentment toward the decedent.

[13 FR 6999, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 1.504 Disclosure of information to a widow, child, or other claimant.

Information may be disclosed to a widow, widower, child, or other dependent parent or other claimant, or the duly authorized representative of any

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of these persons as to matters concerning such person alone when such disclosure will not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the person to whom the inquiry relates. If the person concerning whom the information is sought is deceased, matters concerning such person may be disclosed to the next of kin if the disclosures will not be injurious to the physical or mental health of the person in whose behalf the information is sought or cause repugnance or resentment toward the decedent.

[13 FR 6999, Nov. 27, 1948, as amended at 54 FR 34980, Aug. 23, 1989]

§ 1.505 Genealogy.

Information of a genealogical nature when its disclosure will not be detrimental to the memory of the veteran and not prejudicial, so far as may be apparent, to the interests of any living person or to the interests of the Government may be released by the Department of Veterans Affairs or in the case of inactive records may be released by the Archivist of the United States if in the Archivist's custody.

[13 FR 6999, Nov. 27, 1948]

§ 1.506 Disclosure of records to Federal Government departments, State unemployment compensation agencies, and the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

(a) All records or documents required for official purposes by any department or other agency of the U.S. Government or any state unemployment compensation agency acting in an official capacity for the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be furnished in response to an official request, written, or oral, from such department or agency. If the requesting department or agency does not indicate the purpose for which the records or documents are requested and there is doubt as to whether they are to be used for official purposes, the requesting department or agency will be asked to specify the purpose for which they are to be used.

(b) The Chief Benefits Director, Director of Insurance Service, or designee of either in Central Office, is authorized to release information to OSGLI (Office of Servicemembers' Group Life

Insurance) for the purpose of aiding in the settlement of a particular insurance case.

[33 FR 2994, Feb. 15, 1968]

§ 1.507 Disclosures to members of Congress.

Members of Congress shall be furnished in their official capacity in any case such information contained in the Department of Veterans Affairs files as may be requested for official use. However, in any unusual case, the request will be presented to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or staff or administration head for personal action. When the requested information is of a type which may not be furnished a claimant, the member of Congress shall be advised that the information is furnished to him or her confidentially in his official capacity and should be so treated by him or her. (See 38 U.S.C. 5701.) Information concerning the beneficiary designation of a United States Government Life Insurance or National Service Life Insurance policy is deemed confidential and privileged and during the insured's lifetime shall not be disclosed to anyone other than the insured or his or her duly appointed fiduciary unless the insured or the fiduciary authorizes the release of such information.

[32 FR 10848, July 25, 1967]

§ 1.508 Disclosure in cases where claimants are charged with or convicted of criminal offenses.

(a) Where incompetent claimants are charged with, or convicted of, offenses other than those growing out of their relationship with the Department of Veterans Affairs and in which it is desired to disclose information from the files and records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Regional Counsel, Chief Benefits Director, Veterans Benefits Administration, or the General Counsel if the General Counsel deems it necessary and proper, may disclose to the court having jurisdiction so much of the information from the files and records of the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to the mental condition of such beneficiaries, the same to be available as evidence, as may be necessary to show the mental